

**APPROVED AS AMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**TOWN OF DARIEN  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
NOVEMBER 21, 2005**

**ATTENDANCE:** Evonne Klein, First Selectwoman; Barbara Thorne, Susan Young, Kevin Newman, Linda Santarella.

**STAFF:** John Crary, Administrative Officer

**OTHERS:** David Bain, Bob Johnston, Attorney Wayne Fox.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A meeting with the Town Counsel regarding legal matters began at 7:30 p.m. and concluded at 7:50 p.m.

**CALL TO ORDER**

First Selectwoman Klein called the meeting to order at 7:55 p.m. At that time, she announced that the meeting was being video taped for public broadcast on TV 79, the Darien Town Government channel.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

First Selectwoman Klein welcomed the new Board members and then reviewed the ground rules for Public Comment as being the time when the public could express their opinion on items not on the agenda. She also stated that this agenda item had been moved forward from the end of the agenda to the first item to prevent residents from having to sit through the preceding business in order to inform the Board about their concerns. She requested that the public confine their comments to three minutes. First Selectwoman Klein stated that the order of precedence for the Public Comment time would be that the Selectmen would have the opportunity to ask questions and make comments, followed by any elected officials in the audience, followed by the general public. She also said she would announce this again for those who arrived late.

There were no comments from the public at this time.

**FIRST SELECTWOMAN'S REPORT**

First Selectwoman Klein congratulated the Girl's Volleyball Team for their eleven straight wins, and their championship.

The Darien Coalition Addressing At Risk Behavior (DCARB) had a successful event last week. The Father's Group continues, but the program is beginning to branch out in other ways.

Police Chief Lovello sent out letters to all grocery and liquor stores to remind them about underage drinking during the holidays. A new Underage Drinking Tip Line has been started. The line is connected to the supervisor's office at the Police Station and does not have Caller ID to preserve anonymity. Ms. Thorne stated that she had seen a trailer about this program on Channel 12.

The Domestic Violence Task Force had a meeting last week. They will be holding regular meetings on the third Wednesday of each month.

The Darien Police Department has joined forces with Wilton, Monroe, Easton and Trumbull to form part of the Southwestern Regional Emergency Response Team (SWERT). Currently, Darien has 6 SWAT trained officers. Darien could bring in an additional 24 SWAT trained officers if needed.

On Thursday, the Bond Sale brought in 10 million dollars at 4.099. This will cover the Darien High School, Tokeneke School and the sewer project. Darien's Bond Rating was reaffirmed as Aaa. Mrs. Santarella said this was action by our new Town Treasurer, Mrs. Hendrickson.

Operations Planning Committee met Thursday afternoon as an organizational meeting. All OPC meetings will be held the third Thursday of each month in Room 206 at 7:30 a.m.

The Parks and Recreation Commission held a meeting last Thursday night on deer control. The Commission was overwhelming in support of culling the deer. This item will be added to the agenda later in the meeting.

The Old Timer's Athletic Association held their annual dinner last week. The Darien High School held their Gala Opening of their auditorium, and the Senior Center had their Christmas Sale on Saturday.

First Selectwoman Klein said that she would like the Board to consider forming an Affordable Housing Advisory Board, she would like recommendations for the composition of this board and would like to schedule this for discussion on a future agenda.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**

As previously discussed, Darien is exploring the possibility of forming a Health District with New Canaan. New Canaan had been interested in forming one with Norwalk, but that was unsuccessful. This would be an opportunity for Darien to rectify a number of

deficiencies and to provide greater services to the town. First Selectwoman Klein recommended that the Board continue to investigate this. She stated that meetings needed to be scheduled to do some analysis, such as what services would be provided. She also recommended that the Chair of the RTM district, the Public Safety Chair, Social Services and Board of Finance and Selectmen follow this process through the necessary steps. First Selectwoman Klein then said Mrs. Young would serve as a member of this committee.

Mr. Crary then informed the Board that this project would take a few months to study. The State also has grants available to gather most of the data, which needs to be compiled before a decision is made. Mr. Crary has been in touch with the State about a \$25,000 grant to start the process. Three people will be doing the day-to-day work on this project, Mr. Crary, Ms. Susan Costa and Ms. Alison Graham. By the spring or early summer of 2006, Mr. Crary hopes to have enough information ready so a decision can be made. Ms. Thorne asked if there would be financial savings, which she was told that it would be. Mr. Newman asked what the effect would be on Explorer Post 53. He was told that there would be virtually no effect on the Explorer Post.

Mr. Crary informed the Board that the 2006-2007 Capital Budget preparations would be moved from late December to early December. The department heads have received a memo about this and Mr. Crary hopes to have their material by mid December. The information would be sent to the Board members in early January. Then the Operating Budget presentations could be made to the Board of Selectmen during the end of January, early February. Having a Saturday meeting for the Budget has also been suggested.

Ms. Thorne commented that she had found a short article from the Town of Windsor called "The Citizen's Guide to the Windsor Town Budget" which has a goal of making people understand the complicated set of choices budget making entails.

### **SENIOR CENTER TASK FORCE**

Ms. Santarella reported that the Center had a meeting which was very well attended. Some of the concerns that were raised were keeping the taxes low and many people said they like the Senior Center the way it is. The residents of Edgerton Street enjoy having the Senior Center there but they do have concerns about increased traffic. Ms. Santarella said that she hoped to have a preliminary report to the Board in December.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **a. ) Election of Acting First Selectman in case of temporary absence or illness of First Selectman.**

First Selectwoman Klein stated that last year the Board had elected to have the position of Acting First Selectman rotate through the Board in six month terms in order of

seniority. Ms. Thorne is the Selectwoman with the most seniority, followed by Ms. Santarella, Mr. Newman and Mrs. Young.

**\*\* MR. NEWMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THAT THE OFFICE OF ACTING FIRST SELECTMAN BE DELEGATED TO EACH MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN IN SIX MONTH TERMS IN ORDER OF THEIR SENIORITY.**

**\*\* MS. SANTARELLA SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**b.) Discuss and Take Action of setting the Board of Selectmen Meeting Schedule for 2006.**

The Department Head Meetings occur quarterly each year – next year's meetings will be on January 3rd, April 3rd, July 3rd and October 3rd. Those meetings are usually scheduled for an early slot, such as 4:30 or 5:00 to allow the Department Heads to finish the meeting soon after the conclusion of their work day. A separate memo was sent out regarding the time for the Department Head Meetings. Mr. Newman stated that he would be able attend the meetings if he had the firm dates in advance. There followed a prolonged discussion about the best times for the Board's meeting.

**\*\* MS. THORNE MOVED TO SCHEDULE THE DEPARTMENT HEAD MEETINGS WHICH WILL OCCUR ON JANUARY 3RD, APRIL 3RD, JULY 3RD AND OCTOBER 3RD AT 4:30 P.M. TO BE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN.**

**\*\* MS. YOUNG SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**\*\* MS. THORNE MOVED TO SCHEDULE THE REGULAR BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETINGS WHICH DO NOT OCCUR ON THE DATES SELECTED FOR THE DEPARTMENT HEAD MEETINGS TO BEGIN AT 7:00 P.M.**

**\*\* MR. NEWMAN SECONDED.**

Mr. Bain stated that those who work in New York have difficulty making meetings at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Johnson stated that starting at 8 p.m. would be nice but items that needed lengthy discussions would make the meetings go late. Therefore, he felt 7:30 would be the best. Someone else stated that the RTM meetings would be affected if the meetings started at 7:30.

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Newman asked if an item could be added to the Agenda for adding items to the Agenda. First Selectwoman Klein said that she would but also suggested that he call her or Mr. Crary to add any items to the meeting agenda. The agenda is usually compiled by Thursday night.

**c.) Discuss and Take Action on authorizing Town Treasurer, Joan Hendrickson, to sign checks on behalf of the Town of Darien.**

Mr. Crary explained that due to Kate Clark Buch's recent marriage and name change, the Board needed to approve Joan Hendrickson to sign Town of Darien checks. He also suggested to add the First Selectwoman to the list of those who could sign checks for the Town at this time. Usually, the Town Treasurer will sign the checks but if she is not available, then Ms. Buch would be the one. During the last two weeks, Ms. Buch has been signing all the checks because Ms. Hendrickson did not have the authority to do so. There was a situation several years ago where both authorized officials were unavailable, so therefore, having Selectwoman Klein would be an additional back up.

**\*\* MS. THORNE MOVED TO ADD AMENDMENT TO AUTHORIZE KATE CLARK BUCH, JOAN HENDRICKSON AND THE FIRST SELECTWOMAN, EVONNE KLEIN, TO SIGN TOWN OF DARIEN CHECKS.**

**\*\* MS. YOUNG SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**d.) Discuss Board of Selectmen Priorities for 2006.**

First Selectwoman Klein distributed copies of her priorities for 2005-2006 to the Board, as did Ms. Thorne. First Selectwoman Klein explained that this was to help the Board focus on what they were going to put the money into over the next year, and that it would help set directions and goals. It will also show the community that the Board is listening to what their concerns are. She stressed that her document was only a draft and subject to change.

Following a lengthy discussion on the various items listed, Ms. Thorne suggested that the Board members take the list home and prioritize the various items in order of importance. This was agreeable to all. First Selectwoman Klein reminded everyone that there would be a meeting of Vision at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, at the Congregational Church for those Selectmen that were interested in attending. The Vision meeting will focus on downtown Darien.

**e.) Discuss Police Chief Lovello's memo regarding fundraising efforts to replace the Police boat.**

Mr. Crary reported that this item was strictly for discussion and information. A group of concerned citizens are setting up a private 501(c) (3) corporation called "Darien Police Boat Fundraiser, Inc." to replace the current Darien Police Department patrol boat, which is an open console model. This leaves the boat crew open to the elements. This has been approved by the Police Commission, contingent on subsequent approval by the necessary Town Boards and/or the RTM. The one condition that the Police Commission did set was that no member of the Police Department participate in the solicitation of funds or actively participate in the administration of the funds.

Questions about the comparable operating costs and what state of electronics the boat would have were raised. Mr. Crary explained that the operating costs should remain the same and that GPS system and the other electronic necessary would most likely come with the boat.

**f.) Discuss raising the fee for commercial dump permits for 2006**

Mr. Crary reviewed the memo about the commercial dump permits to the Board. The last increase was 15 years ago. By increasing the fee from \$50.00 to \$100.00, the additional funds can be used to eliminate or reduce the senior dump fees. Mr. Newman suggested that the fee be raised to \$150.00, however, Ms. Thorne pointed out that some of the businesses were small landscaping businesses. Whether this would apply to only commercial plates or to combination plates was also asked. First Selectwoman Klein stated that it would only apply to commercial plates. It was decided to place this on the next agenda for action.

**FORTHCOMING MEETINGS**

This schedule was briefly reviewed by the Board.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

First Selectwoman Klein explained that there were three additional items to be added to the agenda and asked for a motion to do so.

**\*\* MS. SANTARELLA MOVED TO ADD DEER CULLING, FUTURE MEETINGS AND THE AFSCME DECISION TO THE AGENDA.**

**\*\* MS. THORNE SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION MOVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**a) Deer Culling.**

Attorney Wayne Fox reviewed the memo from Caroline Luz dated 11/18/05 for the Board.

Concerns centered around liability issues and insurance. The overall plan is to allow bow hunting from tree stands in Sellecks Woods to reduce the deer population. One possible solution for the liability issue is seeing if a rider can be put on the insurance for a specific period of time. A second suggestion was having the hunters sign waivers.

Strong concerns and questions were raised about the Town Ordinances which read “No one shall hunt....no one shall climb trees...no one shall have firearms...or weapons....in a town park.” Attorney Fox replied that in this particular case, the issue would be over the word “authorized”. The hunters would be authorize by the Town and Parks and Recreation to cull the herd. The RTM is working on the ordinances and it will take some time to amend them, but the process could take up to a year.

First Selectwoman Klein stated that it would be best to transfer \$1,500 from the contingency fund to the Parks and Recreation Department upon approval of the plan for the butchering and signage needed.

**\*\* MS. THORNE MOVED TO APPROVE THE \$1,500 FROM THE CONTINGENCY FUND TO PARKS AND RECREATION FOR BUTCHERING AND SIGNAGE WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT IF PARKS AND RECREATION DECIDES NOT TO FOLLOW THROUGH, THE MONEY WILL BE RETURNED TO THE CONTINGENCY FUND.**

There was also some discussion about whether the insurance costs would be too high. First Selectwoman Klein stated that she felt that would be a decision for Parks and Recreation to make.

Ms. Santarella stated that because she is against killing of any kind, she was going to vote no on this measure. However, after seeing what Lyme’s Disease has done to a number of people, this was the only reason she will vote for the culling of the herd.

**\*\* MR. NEWMAN SECONDED.**  
**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **b.) Future Meetings.**

There was a memo sent to the Board asking if they would be available on the 28th, prior to the invitation to participate in the Vision Session downtown, from 5:30- 7:00 p.m. After some discussion, it was suggested that the Board meet at 7:00 p.m. before the Nearwater Lane meeting. The topics of discussion would be the priority list and the dump fees.

It was decided that the December 5th meeting, which is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. would remain at that time.

There was a brief discussion about the budget meetings. Westport spends one full Friday working on the budget. Another possibility would be a Saturday.

**c.) AFSCME v. Town of Darien, Et. Al. - CV-030828991 S**

**\*\* MS. SANTARELLA MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN COUNSEL TO SETTLE UP TO THE AMOUNT OF \$45,000 IN THE AFSCME V. TOWN OF DARIEN, ET. AL. - CV-030828991S - LAWSUIT.**

**\*\* MS. YOUNG SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

First Selectwoman Klein opened the floor back up for public comment. Mr. Cameron introduced himself to the Board and the audience as the Area 9 Cable Coordinator for video taping and broadcasting the Board Meetings on Cable TV 79.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MS. YOUNG MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* MS. THORNE SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Sharon L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services